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BURROWS CAVE: A VAULT OF EARLY AMERICAN HISTORY

The first detailed study of Burrows' Cave, and its hundreds of artifacts, removes half a millennium of America's cultural life from pre-history into proto-history. It also gongs a first round of hoax-callers, who've been baying now for four years.

Rock Art Pieces from Burrows' Cave, Vol. 1, contains 150 photos of 116 artifacts found in the 500-foot-long cavern, in southeastern Illinois, by Russell E. Burrows, who co-authors the 320-page work (Superior Heartland Press, 1992). Several of these worked-stone figures show epigraphy and calendaric symbols which could be familiar to antiquarians, if viewed in Eurasian contexts.

But the book's sleeper is a reasoned and evidence-filled recognition of the cultural milieu of Burrows' Cave, by co-author Prof. James P. Scherz. Therein, pre-history metamorphoses into history. He is now compiling a second volume to detail that transition.

Scherz teaches civil and environmental engineering at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, and is a member of Wisconsin's Ancient Earthworks Society. Burrows, a caver from Olney, Ill., who found the controversial cave a decade ago, also wrote Mystery Cave of Many Faces with co-author Fred Rydholm (Superior Heartland, 1992).

Central to Scherz' far-reaching thesis are scores of yellow-metal coins found by Burrows in the cave, recognizable as trade-issues minted by the Saka commercial culture in northern India. Identical Saka coins had earlier been discovered in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, amid pre-Columbian copper mines on the south shore of Lake Superior.

Researching the coins, Scherz learned the Saka trade-culture had controlled land silk-routes between the Caspian Sea and the Pacific Ocean from perhaps 500 BC till after 100 AD. After 150 BC, Scherz also learned, the Sakas oversaw trans-oceanic trade, too.

From reading Indus history, Scherz learned the Saka tribes were allied with other northern Asiatics, including the Satavahanas of India and the Yueh-che of northern Afghanistan. These tribal names prove relevant to a unified history of Eurasia and America.

GUEST SPEAKERS presented new publications left to right: Fred Rydholm, Russell Burrows, and Professor James Scherz.

YELLOW COIN found 15 Nov. 1987 in Burrows' Cave.

The Saka, or Shaka, and the Satavahana tribe-names are linguistic variants of "Scythian," which mega-tribe is so familiar in the proto-history of Celtic Europe. Indeed, when Alexander the Great took control of land trade-routes in Asia from the Sakas and Satavahanas, his journalists identified these tribes as Scythian. Under his administration, Saka-Scythians continued managing trade as satraps. After his empire collapsed, Sakas resumed ultimate control of commerce from the central Asian steppes to the Pacific Ocean.

Besides a common linguistic root, the three tribe-names share a deific theme: Scyth, mother of heroes, who named Sakas, Scythians, Saxons, Scots and Scandinavians. As a dire Fate who cut life's thread, she also named such cutting-tools as the saxe or sachs and scythe. Mt. Everest may also be hers, since its Nepalese name -- Sagamata -- takes root in Indo-European words relating to Scyth's triple-role: the prefix saga- yielding ideas including cut and wisdom (both aspects of the hag- Fate), the suffix -mata indicating mother.

Further, elements in Satavahana suggest that tribe had migrated from northern India near Mt. Everest to central India, where it allied with Celto-Carthaginians in its ports. The prefix Saka- can denote highland dwellers (far-seers), while the va- syllable indicates primordial truth-nature -- a quality also associated with Mt. Everest in Hindu folk-history. The suffix -hana is cognate with the Lat. gens = folk or people.

This latter offers a riddle: Folk and people are cognate words in Indo-European, "f" and "k" migrating into "p"; and folk is thought to have originated from Volkh-the-sorceress, Scythian deity who named the Volga River. Yet, folk's roots are stamped "unattested," while people is said to be of unknown Etruscan origin. Hints enough exist, however, to riddle this Scythic knot.

The Scythq-Celtic tribe of Volcae, for instance, is said to have arrived in western Europe from an unknown source. It's name, though, is thought cognate with Wales, Gael and Celt, all from the root-word "weal" ("g" or "c" migrating into "w" or "hu") which can mean both foreigner and highlander or ridge-folk. That migration, of "g" into "hu," recommends that the Yueh-chi branch of the Saka trade-empire in Scherz' reconstruction, is etymologically related to Gael and Celt, and denotes Sino-Scythian highlanders.

Wales' folk-history records that Welshfolk hailed from the western foothills of the Caucusus, where meet Europe, Asia and Asia Minor; whence Etruscans, also, were thought to have immigrated to Italy. And the Volga, which empties into the Caspian Sea across the Caucasus from the Welsh and Etruscan homelands, drains the Ural Mountains watershed to the north.

From Scherz' groundwork, we form an idea that Scythians -- Gauls, Welsh and Celts hard by the Altantic, classical Scythians straddling the land where Europe becomes Asia, Sakas and Satavahanas dwelling in Asia's heart, and Yueh-chi who could spit into the Pacific -- identified themselves as hillfolk or highlanders under a deific yoke of Scythe or Sagamata. If so, that entire amalgamation of tribes likely shared a common vision that Mt. Everest, Sagamata, embodied their common mother. This suggests Saka/Shaka is cognate with the Hindu-Shakti, the world-mother.

Scherz links this Sino-Indie-Carthaginian trade-net with America and, ultimately, with the Lake Superior

copper deposits and Burrows' Cave, via the Yueh-chi commercial navy. For centuries till 400 AD, the Yueh-chi controlled the trade of sea-otter pelts -- warmer and more aesthetically-pleasing than beaver -- from the Fox Isles or Aleutians.

Scherz reasons the Yueh-chi may have used the same route inland as would the Dene tribes a millennium later; up the MacKenzie River. He suggests the Saka/Yueh-chi consortium may have crossed the Great Divide and descended the Missouri. From there, Lake Superior is accessible by portage, while Burrows' Cave is reached via the Ohio and Wabash rivers.

If so, he notes, it would account for the naming of the Sauk, Amerinds who inhabited lands near both Lake Superior and Burrows' Cave. It would account also, he suggests, for the Yuchis.

The Yuchi, an Amerind folk on the southern Appalachian slopes, is twice relevant beyond its name. Yuchis, to cite Joseph P. Mahan's investigations in The Secret: America in World History Before Columbus (as also did Scherz), practice religious customs -- including a feast of the tabernacle -- strikingly like those of the early Hebrews. Or for that matter, like those of early Carthaginians or Phoenicians.

We wish to state the position of the Epigraphic Society

"The Epigraphy studied on some of the artifacts said to come from Burrows' Cave report that in their opinion these are of modern manufacture. Some thirty illustrations were published in ESOP Vol. 19 and the supposed inscriptions on them have not been recognized as any known script or language."

Signed: Norman Totten, President
Barry Fell, President Emeritus
Jón Polansky, Chairman of the Board

When Europeans first settled that region, they reported the Yuchis produced for trade vast quantities of mulberry cakes -- mulberry patties sun-dried into solidity for preservation, particularly at sea. A curious coincidence, since mulberry bushes were traditionally the earliest Chinese silk-factories, and since -- as Scherz notes -- the Yueh-chi controlled the silk-routes of eastern Asia.

One immediate significance of Scherz' reconstruction is to place scripts of the Celto-Carthaginian trade-axis in India. These will have included Ogam, Punic from North Africa and Iberia, and hieroglyphs of Egypt -- all of which appear on artifacts of Burrows' Cave. That doesn't mean languages of the Celto-Carthaginian trade-axis will have endured in India and northern Asia as languages of the agora. Mediterranean emigres in India will have adapted their writing systems to their adopted tongues.

This conclusion follows from the failed attempt by epigrapher Barry Fell to translate Punic, Ogam and Egyptian scripts from the cave. Finding these unreadable as Gedelic, Punic and Coptic, Fell judged the Burrow's Cave artifacts to be modern hoaxes.

What languages might those record? Because Alexander's journalists had called the Sakas "Turks", Scherz suggests Turkic tongues be considered. And, since the Saka culture -- minters of the coins -- was based in India, various languages of that sub-continent bear consideration, too.

A second significance of Scherz' view is that whatever or whoever that folk we modernly call Scythians, they were a folk touching both Atlantic and Pacific oceans. Proto-history recommends that the Scythians had been capable, perhaps since the 1700 BC - mark established at Peterborough, Ontario, of collectively sailing either.

Such ideas, spawned by the Burrows'-Scherz book, have value. But what makes Rock Art Pieces of particular worth is that it helps us to adjust our understanding of American proto-history, allowing the northern New World to have been part of a world-economy, at least between the time of Christ and the collapse of the Roman Empire.

George R. Murray

THURSDAY, JULY 23, 1992

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Norse Contribution

To the Editor:

"Norse America" deserves far more attention than "Norsemen In America Flourished Then Faded." South Dakota Historical Collections, Volume IV (1908), states, "The tax lists, now in the Vatican in Rome, show there were at least 1,000 families in the American colonies in the 12th century . . . In 1488 they begged again the pope for a bishop and priest and he ordained and sent them a new apostle by the name of Mathias, and there ends the record of the Catholic 'Nordske' missions."

Records abound in America and in Europe. As for Newfoundland (an island) being Vinland (a peninsula), no way.

W. R. ANDERSON
President, Leif Ericson Society
Chicago, July 9, 1992

ANNUAL SUMMER FAMILY OUTING AUGUST 15th AND 16th, 1992 IN SOUTHERN INDIANA

The Ninth Annual Family Outing of the MidWestern Epigraphic Society will be a two day affair Saturday and Sunday, August 15th and 16th. William and Marilyn Kreisle have invited the club to stay at their beautiful log cabin home, sixteen miles south of Levenworth, Indiana in the heart of the hills. For driving directions, call the Kreisles' (phone 1-812-739-4677).

Members will gather for lunch at the Overlook Restaurant at 1:00 p.m, Saturday afternoon. The Levenworth-Marengo exit is located 50 miles west of Louisville, Kentucky (four hour drive from Columbus, Ohio) where I-64 crosses 66. Go south of exit 1 1/2 miles on Route 66. The restaurant is on a four hundred foot hill over looking the Ohio River.

The club will water depart for the Kreisles' recently constructed cabin. A unique four story log cabin on a hilltop in the center of an ox bow which enters into the Ohio River. Bill checks out equipment for the Texas Instrument company and uses his platform roof for star alignments.

A pot luck dinner will be served in the evening. Bring some food, your sleeping bags, hiking shoes, fishing pole (if you care to fish) and swimming suits for the river or just take a few laps in their 60 meter lap pool inside the home. Sunday morning we will explore archealogical sites along the river. Leave for home Sunday afternoon. R.S.V.P.

Kimberly Lowe from St Louis, Missouri greets Russell Burrows.

CONVERSATION WITH CLUB MEMBERS (left to right) Mike Murray, Neil McLean, Kirt Lowry , Mike Murray, Jr., Professor James Scherz.

"BOOKS FOR SALE" offered by Laurie Hinshaw.

BURROWS CAVE ART Art representing many cultures discovered in the cave.

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